

# *Cambodia*

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# The Poor Son of a Poor Man

by Donald R. Furniss

"Please sir, do you have something for me too?" At these words I turned to see the mud-smeared, sweat-stained face of a ten year old Cambodian boy. His tattered shorts and shaggy hair revealed at once that he was the 'poor son of a poor man' and in the natural he would never be anything else. It was high noon, and the sun was blazing down in all of its fury. My one thought was to get to the car for a drink of cold water from the thermos, for we had been on the go since shortly after sun-up. This was a new area never before visited by Missionary or even National worker. The 18 kilometer trip from the main road had been a tedious one. Clay, rutted by ox-cart wheels, then washed by torrential rains; sand, hub deep; bridges barely wide enough for the car and with a drop of at least a foot on either approach, made the car grunt and groan for over two hours as we ground to our destination. The "road" came to an abrupt end at the edge of a stream. If we were to get to the main village, it was to be by foot. Across a narrow bridge and following a path that meandered along the bank of the creek, we soon saw the thatch roofs of the village. A few hun-

dred yards more and we were in the midst of the community. After the proper greetings, the Pastor began to explain the story of Creation thru to the Flood, drawing a parallel to our present day and presenting Christ as the Ark of Safety. The message was received with joy. The people purchased Gospels and books almost recklessly. It was in this mass that I first saw the face of this 'poor son of a poor man'. He seemed earnestly listening to all that was said and he observed everything with keen interest, yet made no purchase. We were nearly back to the car when he called to me and I imagined it was just another one of the many kids seeking a free tract. He had run almost a kilometer in the blistering heat of the noonday to ask, "Do you have something for me too?" Seeking the shade of a near-by palm, we talked further and he said, "Sir, I have but one riel (about 3c). In the village they were buying five and ten riels worth. Do you have something for just one riel?" His anxiety was relieved as the book box was opened and various portions taken out. Immediately it was bargain day! The value of the riel had climbed. The water in the car could wait, this lad needed to hear of the Water of Life. The soft seat cushions would have been a ready rest for tired legs and feet, but here was one who must know of Christ who said, "Come unto me and I will give you rest". That day, this 'poor son of a

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# JAIL TESTING

by Harry M. Taylor

*"Unto you it is given... to suffer for his sake." Phil. 1:29*

The true calibre of a Christian is best known by testing. Here is an account of a rather severe test for some young Cambodian Christians.

Our new Cambodian Mission translator, Ith Chhun, was converted about two years ago as a student in a provincial college. He has been an avid student of the Word and a faithful witness. He uses part of his salary to rent a dwelling for poor college students that he might witness to them. His incentive and zeal are refreshing.

He felt the Lord would have him hold special meetings in several chapels during the month of May while the missionaries were in Conference at Dalat. He made up his itinerary, wrote letters inviting himself and took off. Little did he realize what this venture held in store for him.

News came clear to Dalat that Chhun and Kru Ang, pastor of our Takeo chapel were in jail. Opposition has been strong in this province and we were not really surprised. I happened to be back in Cambodia on mission business for a few hours and was presented the news of this situation upon arrival. I drove

immediately to the scene to see what could be done. The men had already been released and I heard their story with amazement.

The new evangelist and his whole congregation were met by the police as they left the chapel and were taken to the station. All but the two workers and an elder were released. Next morning the elder was permitted to leave but the two men were handcuffed and marched through the city streets to jail. This news with an accompanying rumor went all over the country-side declaring that anyone having Christian literature in their possession would also be apprehended in like manner, which we are told, led to a prompt burning or burying of books and literature on the part of many.

The two men were put in prison with the worst law offenders, and locked in leg irons with the most desperate. Chhun became violently ill during the night and lay chained in irons on the ground untreated till morning. Pastor Ang, when asked if he sang like Paul and Silas in jail, said, "No I was too busy praying for Chhun fearful lest he would die." He didn't die and is restored today, praise the Lord!

Ang with a glowing face said, "If I had paid five thousand riels they wouldn't have permitted me to preach in prison. By this experience I preached to the whole prison without even asking permission."

It proved to be much easier putting the preachers in jail than finding a charge against them, which by the way, is still very indefinite. After three nights of incarceration they were released to go on serving the Lord rejoicing. God has planted his Church in Cambodia. Pray the Gospel witness will resound to His glory in an ever increasing tide of blessing.

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#### ***The Poor Son of a Poor Man***

poor man' heard the Gospel story for the first time. "What will become of him", I wondered as he ambled off down the road clutching his purchase to his breast? Will he believe and be saved, thus becoming heir to eternity's riches, or will he continue in his heathen darkness and die the 'poor son of a poor man'? Your prayers may decide that question!

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*Mr. C. M. Westergren, Editor*

*Mrs. B. D. Dunning, Assistant Editor*

## **CAMBODIAN CULTURE IN REVIEW**

*Here is the Buddhist Version of the Prodigal Son. The similarity is interesting and the differences profoundly significant. Compare Luke 15:11-24.*

There was a young man, who, seduced by foolish people, left his father and wandered to a country far away. When the father heard that his son had run away, he set out in search of him, roaming the country in every direction for about 50 years. While searching, he came to a great city and there built a large mansion which satisfied him completely. But as the years passed, the wealthy father continued to sorrow day and night for his son.

The foolish son continued to wander from village to village, poor and miserable, always seeking food and clothing. Sometimes people gave him something, other times he received nothing. In the course of time, he came to his father's new mansion to beg food and raiment. As he approached the house he thought to himself, "Where am I? This man must be a king or a high official. I dare not enter here for fear they will make me do forced labor." So he hurried away, seeking a poorer section of the city.

But the father had seen the beggar and recognized that he was his son. He immediately sent messengers to fetch the poor man. When they caught him, he fainted, thinking they wanted to punish him. When

the rich man heard this happened, he realized that his son would never recognize or believe him to be the owner of the large estate. Instead he instructed ill-clad, low class coolies to go find him and present this offer: "If you work for me, I will give you coolie type work, but you will receive double pay." The poor son accepted because he was used to doing this type of work. As a servant he came to live on the rich man's property. While he worked there his only thought was, "Such wealth can never belong to me." In fact, he cherished the idea of poverty.

One day, twenty years later, the rich man perceived that his son had arrived at the consciousness of being noble, and called together a gathering of friends and relatives. Then he announced that he was giving all his property to the poor man. At another gathering of the King, officials, and important business men, he made the following speech: "This is my son who ran away long ago. During the years of searching for my son I built this house. Now I am giving all my property and possessions to him. Let him do with it what he wants." The poor man was startled with surprise. He remembered his former poverty and low social status. As he became owner of his father's possessions he thought to himself, "Now I am a happy man."

—Originally from Buddhist writings. Condensed here from "Buddhism" by Paul Eakin.